



STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
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CONSUMER PROTECTION DIVISION
1-800-368-8808 or 304-558-8986

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 25, 2009

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Attorney General McGraw, AARP Foundation Warns Consumers About Latest "Grandparents" Scam

CHARLESTON - Attorney General Darrell McGraw and officials from the AARP Foundation are warning grandparents across West Virginia to beware of a new scam targeting them. In this scam, con-artists pose as grandchildren and ask their "grandparents" to wire money via wire services or to send money via money orders.

"In order to avoid becoming a victim, grandparents need to be completely certain that the person on the other end of the phone is in fact their grandchild," said Attorney General McGraw.

On Monday, June 21, Hazel Lilly of Hurricane, West Virginia, received a phone call from an individual posing as her grandson. The caller said, "Grandma, it's me." Ms. Lilly responded by asking if it was her grandson, and the caller indicated that he was. The caller told Ms. Lilly that he had gone to a friend's wedding in Canada. While he was out of the country, he wrecked his rental car and it had sustained \$3,500.00 worth of damage. The caller asked Ms. Lilly to wire him \$3,600.00 because Canadian authorities were detaining him in jail until he could pay to have the car repaired and pay \$100.00 in attorney fees. Ms. Lilly immediately went to Walmart and wired \$3,600.00 to Canada.

An hour later, Ms. Lilly received a second call requesting the reference number for the wire transfer. Once the individual has a reference number for a wire transfer, he can pick up the money without any identification outside of the United States.

"Be suspicious of any request you get over the telephone asking you to transfer money via wire services," said Scott Adkins of the AARP Foundation.

In addition to verifying the identity of the person on the other end of the phone, McGraw suggested grandparents take several steps to protect themselves, including:

- Don't offer information. If the caller says, "Hi Grandpa, this is your grandson speaking," be sure to ask "Which one?" Typically, if the scam artist is questioned, he will hang up.
- Offer to call your grandchild back.
- Don't give out bank account numbers, credit card numbers, social security numbers or any personally-identifying numbers over the phone to anyone who calls you on the phone.

"We're also asking employees at locations that issue wire transfers to be especially vigilant and on the lookout for this type of

fraudulent activity," McGraw added.

If you believe you have already been the victim of this scam – or if you receive a telephone call that sounds like this type of scam – contact the Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division immediately at 1-800-368-8808.

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